

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 7 people over alleged links to the Gülen movement. In October 2020, a UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) [opinion](#) said that widespread or systematic imprisonment of individuals with alleged links to the group may amount to crimes against humanity. Solidarity with OTHERS has compiled a detailed [database](#) to monitor the Gülen-linked mass detentions since a failed coup in July 2016.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunc](#), a former public sector worker who was sacked from his job by a decree-law during the 2016-2018 state of emergency and who was reported missing as of August 6, 2019, in what appears to be one of the latest cases in a string of suspected [enforced disappearance](#) of government critics since 2016.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

25 March: Following the arrest of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, the Ankara Governor's Office [banned](#) all protests and public gatherings for six days from March 26 to April 1, while the İzmir Governor's Office imposed a four-day ban from March 26 to 29 on all demonstrations and press statements.

27 March: Turkey's interior minister has [announced](#) that more than 1,800 people have been detained and 260 have been put in pretrial detention for participating in protests that erupted after İstanbul's popular mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu, was taken into custody last week.

27 March: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) 40 people, including three journalists, to prison terms ranging from 3 months 10 days to 5 months for violating the law on assemblies during a protest against trustee appointments in Kadıköy.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

24 March: Social media platform X has [blocked](#) access in Turkey to Bianet, one of the country's few remaining independent news outlets with over 365,000 Turkish and 11,000 English followers, following government orders over its protest coverage after the arrest of Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

26 March: As mass protests grip Turkey, social media platform X [challenged](#) a government order blocking 126 accounts, many belonging to critics, students, and media, filing a case at the Constitutional Court, amid growing digital censorship following Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's detention.

27 March: Turkey's broadcasting watchdog, RTÜK, has [imposed](#) a 10-day broadcast ban on Sözcü TV and imposed sanctions on three other opposition-aligned stations over their coverage of mass protests following the detention of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

27 March: Prominent Turkish political scientist and journalist Nuray Mert has been [indicted](#) on charges of membership in a terrorist organization over a photo taken with Kurdish militants during an interview in Syria in 2014.

27 March: BBC correspondent Mark Lowen has been [deported](#) from Turkey after being detained in İstanbul while covering protests following the arrest of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

27 March: Even photojournalists covering the protests were among the seven journalists first [detained](#) over their reporting on demonstrations against the jailing of Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, but released Thursday following widespread outrage.

27 March: Turkish filmmaker and Flu TV founder İlker Caniklilgil, who has nearly a million followers on social media, was [arrested](#) for allegedly inciting hatred and calling for violence during a broadcast referencing a movie scene.

28 March: Swedish journalist Joakim Medin was [detained](#) upon arrival in Turkey, where he planned to cover protests over Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's arrest, just a day after British journalist Mark Lowen was deported under similar accusations.

28 March: A Turkish court [blocked](#) access to three websites that published a CHP-issued boycott list targeting pro-government media outlets ignoring the protests and their affiliated brands, following a call by the opposition party.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

25 March: The İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has [launched](#) an investigation into the teachers' union Eğitim Sen for allegedly inciting crime after it backed a student-led academic boycott protesting the detention of Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

28 March: Mehmet Pehlivan, the lawyer of jailed İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, was [detained](#) and released after a two-day interrogation.

28 March: Ebru Özdemir, Deputy Mayor of İstanbul's Şişli district, was [arrested](#) on terrorism-related charges amid a broader crackdown following the detention of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

KURDISH MINORITY

26 March: A Turkish court has [blocked](#) access to the pro-Kurdish news agency Mezopotamya's latest domain, mezopotamyaajansi42.com, citing national security, continuing the digital censorship targeting critical Kurdish media.

27 March: Former HDP municipal councilor Ceylan Aslan was [sentenced](#) to 8 years in prison by a Diyarbakır court on March 26 for attending peaceful protests and events, with

charges including "membership in a terrorist organization" and violating the law on assemblies.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

24 March: During the protests against the arrest of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, it was reported that police violently [dispersed](#) crowds in Saraçhane using plastic bullets and tear gas, chasing demonstrators through side streets and detaining many after beating them.

27 March: Following police intervention in protests over the arrest of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, a woman placed under house arrest [reported](#) being sexually harassed and violently assaulted in custody, prompting legal action and monitoring by the İstanbul Bar Association and CHP lawyers.

29 March: At the 679th "F Session" protest by the Human Rights Association's İstanbul Prison Commission, concerns were [raised](#) about the deteriorating health of seriously ill inmate Uğur Ok, held in Sincan High Security Prison No. 1, who suffers from chronic bronchiectasis and life-threatening complications.